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Davis (left), Schreiber and Posey in *The Daytrippers*

THE DAYTRIPPERS

There are so many gay-themed movies released these days that soon there may no longer be a need for gay film festivals. We've reached the mainstream. This week's entry is *The Daytrippers*. It is not actually gay per se, but gay in a *Crying Game* sort of way.

'What?' you ask. Unfortunately, if I were to say more than that, the surprise would be ruined.

Cinema

Suffice it to say that the large cast includes Parker Posey, Anne Meara, Stanley Tucci, Campbell Scott, Liev Schreiber, Hope Davis and Marcia Gay Harden (one clue: she is not the gay one).

The Daytrippers is a hoot from beginning to end. The main plot concerns Eliza (Davis), who has found what appears to be a love note written to her husband (Tucci) and is worried that he is having an affair. So she and her whole family—mother, father, sister and sister's boyfriend—pile into a car to drive from New Jersey to New York City in search of answers.

Director Greg Mottola has crafted a hilarious story and brought the best out of each of the cast members—on a shoestring budget. While it may not be a film that will leave audiences rolling in the aisles, it is much funnier than anything out right now. The ending alone is worth the price of admission.

On screen April 25 through May 1 at Cinema 21, 616 NW 21st Ave., 223-4515.

CHASING AMY

The final installment in writer-director Kevin Smith's New Jersey trilogy, *Chasing Amy* follows the cult classic *Clerks* and *Mallrats*. Lifelong best friends Holden McNeil (the adorable Ben Affleck) and Banky Edwards (Jason Lee) are enjoying success as the creators of the cult hit comic book "Bluntman and the Chronic." When they meet fellow comic book artist Alyssa Jones (Joey Lauren Adams), Holden's desire for the charmer is immediate. Alyssa, however, has her eyes set elsewhere, and not on members of the opposite sex. She decides, nevertheless, to pursue a platonic friendship with Holden.

Smith directs a very funny film, for the first half. Holden is presented with a dilemma: Feeling the way he does, can he merely be friends with this woman? Banky, who knows Holden best, thinks not—as does the audience.

It should be a rule that a director never cast a personal romantic interest in a lead. It is quite obvious that Adams is ill-suited for the role and for the camera in general. In addition to having a whining and ear-piercing voice—which makes Jennifer Tilly sound like Ashley Judd (quite possibly the most beautiful female voice in movies today)—Adams is a terrible actress. That fact, coupled with Smith's completely fantastical approach to the straight-man-in-love-with-a-gay-

woman story, makes for a most unpleasant movie-going experience.

All of the characters in the film, with the exception of Alyssa, are written with the utmost precision and depth. Unfortunately all that is erased by Smith's cluelessness as to how lesbians behave. He can only wish that they would fall to their knees for him as Alyssa does to Holden. It is insulting to lesbians that a character would compromise her sexuality just because a guy does

not let up in his pursuit of her.

The more interesting story would have been one of Holden and Banky's attraction for each other, which is only briefly alluded to at the film's very end.

Opens April 18 at KOIN Center Cinemas, Southwest Third Avenue and Clay Street, 225-5555 category 4608.

THAT OLD FEELING

Bette Midler may just be the funniest actress in Hollywood today. Her facial expressions rival those of Jim Carrey and were her trademark long before Carrey even entered high school.

She manages to use a few of those clever looks as Lilly, an actress, in *That Old Feeling*.

Midler plays opposite one of the most unlikely actors, Dennis Farina, and manages to make it work. They both do, actually. The two star as exes who get together for the first time in 14 years at their daughter's (Paula Marshall) wedding.

At first it seems like a big mistake: They are as nice as Dennis Rodman is to most cameramen; hitting, punching and shouting ensue the moment they lay eyes on one another. In the next moment though, they are in each other's arms.

Director Carl Reiner does a decent job of directing the cast—which includes hot newcomer Danny Nucci as a tabloid photographer who has

Farina and Midler in *That Old Feeling*

the hots for the just-married daughter, and Gail O'Grady (of *NYPD Blue*) who plays Farina's new wife—and the intricacies of the sticky plot. Nobody ends up with his or her original companion, and many may expect Nucci to end up with someone other than who he finally does.

The one-liners are not as forthcoming as in the usual Bette Midler comedy, yet she and the rest of the cast make for an entertaining few hours away from home.

Now playing at an Act III theater near you.

Reviewed by Tim Nasson, a syndicated writer whose autobiographical novel *The Truth* will be released later this year. He can be reached at TNasson@aol.com.